

These Satellites! Gremlins in the Kremlin!

CPYRGHT

By Chalmers M. Roberts

Since American officials spent most of yesterday at meetings with each other on what goes on in Poland and Hungary—

and with little more to go on than the same dispatches printed in the newspapers—let's pretend we've wiretapped Moscow's Kremlin and can catch the conversation across the presidium table.



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There's no guarantee that the tap is genuine, but maybe the argument went something like this:

Molotov: "Nikita Sergeevich, you've really botched this business in the People's Democracies (translation: satellites) with all your kow-towing to that Tito. I told you nothing good would come of it, but you wouldn't listen. Now you and I and Mikoyan and Kaganovich have seen the result with our own eyes in Warsaw. That Gomulka! Such insolence! He's thrown out Rokossovsky, he's threatening to turn the Polish army on our troops if we even move them. It was never like this when Stalin was alive. We've got to do what he would have done—put on the screws, use force, throw out that Gomulka and put in our own man. Of course, if you want to be clever about it, Gomulka can have a hunting accident. But he's got to go."

Khrushchev: "Now just a minute, Vyacheslav Mikhailovich, I'll admit Gomulka is a such-and-such and you heard me tell him off in Warsaw. But don't be a fool. If we use force to throw him out, all hell will break loose."

Molotov: "It's already broken loose. Haven't you read the secret police report that the Polish Army is against us. We've got to use our own power. And strike hard."

Khrushchev: "What would it gain? True, we would be sure of holding Eastern Europe, even that slippery East Germany. But at what price? After all the main idea in making up to Tito has paid off."

Molotov: "How?"

Khrushchev: "It's convinced all those Asians that things have really changed here at home since Stalin. Ask Bulganin, he had so many flowers tossed at him in India and Burma he wanted to open a florist shop."

Molotov: "Nuts. Facts."

Khrushchev: "Look at the

progress we've made in India, Afghanistan, Burma, Indonesia, Ceylon. Do you want to queer all that? Look at the foothold we've gotten in the Middle East, more power than ever before under the Czars or Stalin. Shall we throw that away?"

Molotov: "It sounds wonderful. But where's the real estate? All you can show since Stalin is a piece of Vietnam. In the old days you could see progress on the map. All your gains are psychological, not actual. They are not yet irreversible."

Khrushchev: "Yes, but the tide is running our way. And look at NATO, it's falling apart; the Americans say so themselves. They have to get out of Iceland and after Adenauer goes we'll get them out of Germany, too. If you have your way, we'll scare the West into getting together again. We'll loose Nehru and U Nu and Nasser, too. They'll believe the American talk about Communist colonialism; for once we'll look worse than even the French. Even if we have to live with Titos from Poland to Bulgaria, it's a cheap price to pay. It will convince Western Europe that all Eastern European countries are independent. We can more easily promote a neutral belt idea, including all of Germany. Force would ruin all our gains."

Bulganin: "Now, comrades, let's hold our tempers and remember this is a collective leadership. And let's have no talk, either, of changing jobs around here. That's what the American press keeps predicting, you know. We've got to hang together and work this out, somehow."

Khrushchev: "Well, Gomulka is demanding to talk to me on the phone. I move that we put the best face possible on the business and remind everybody that he has sworn eternal solidarity with the Soviet Union and our party. Zhukov says he's satisfied that as long as we retain our forces in East Germany and the Warsaw pact bases in the other People's Democracies there is no threat to our security. Besides, did you notice that the American Secretary of State said the other day the Warsaw Pact was a good legal basis for our keeping our troops there? Let's vote and get this over."

Thereupon, with grumbling and some "nyet" votes (number could not be ascertained) Khrushchev got his way. He goes to the phone, tells had printed harsh words about the Polish press and promises

to restrict Soviet troops to their bases in Poland.

Bulganin: "Any more business?"

At this point a messenger brings in a report that Imre Nagy has been made Hungarian Premier, that rioting is out of hand in Budapest and that Nagy has had to call out Soviet troops and planes. Bulganin reads the dispatch.

Molotov: "Now who's been right? Are we going to stand for this? Next it will be the Czechs and the Romanians or even that fellow in Albania. This Tito has been pushing them all to defy us and you let him do it, Nikita Sergeevich—you and the others here you persuaded. Why these Hungarians are even shouting 'Out with the Russians.' And this Nagy can't even control his own people despite 365,000 troops and secret police of his own. Let's crack down hard, send in reinforcements and teach the Hungarians a lesson—and show all others who's boss, just as Stalin used to do."

Khrushchev: "I can't believe these dispatches. How can the workers in a People Democracy be acting this way? It must be American provocation. That Allen Dulles again! Of course, we can't let them throw Nagy out, too. We should have let him take over sooner the way Gomulka did, and this wouldn't have happened. But what is this use of Soviet forces against Hungarians going to do to our position all around the world? The Americans will be saying it

proves Communism rests on force alone."

Molotov: "You've got it backwards. We never should have let Nagy come to power—or Gomulka either. And it wouldn't have happened if you hadn't insisted on making up with Tito. Now they'll all be trying to play the Americans off against us the way he does and Eisenhower already is hinting about giving aid."

Khrushchev: "Well, if this is true about Hungary, if they really are trying to drive out our troops and destroy the People's Democracy, why I'm in favor of —"